

MASSIVE fantastic

E-zine #1

The AMAZING World OF Toy Inventor & Collector Mel Birnkrant !



Ebooks

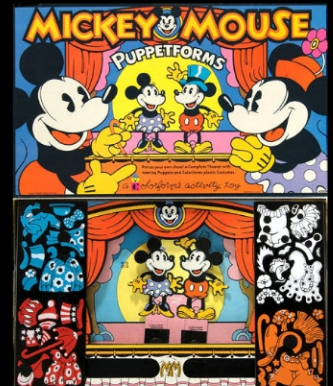
Greetings from



Video



Interview



I received a bit of a frantic email from the AMAZING Mel Birnkrant the other week. He told me with a bit of shock that the photos I had posted along with our many ebook posts, interview posts and art posts on his work from my art blog MASSIVEfantastic were gone!! When you host your blog with years of writing and images on a FREE host this day is always coming. The day they decide to take back there free gift, haha!

I had a choice to make. I could restore all the images on another free host (and risk losing them again). I could attempt to create videos on art that wouldnt as easily be lost (which I have been trying to do). Or another option would be to archive my writing and images in a PDF Magazine (which you are reading now). This is the choice I went with because I can countinue to blog/write/share art and host it somewhere safe and not risk losing my work again.

What does this long intro have to do with Mel Birnkrant's Special MASSIVEfantastic Iussue? EVERYTHING! Artists like Mel Birnkrant are the reason I feel such a strong desire to not only share GREAT art but to preserve GREAT art. Mel Birnkrant is the deal breaker that has convinced me to countinue on! So on that note please enjoy this issue preserving SIX amazing Ebooks, TWO amazing videos and ONE great interview!

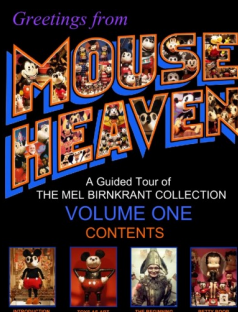
Mel Birnkrant: www.MelBirnkrant.com



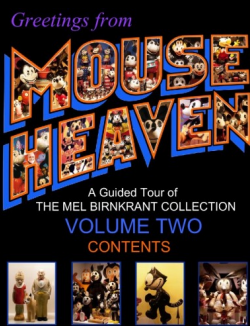
Video: The Toy Inventor
Page 3



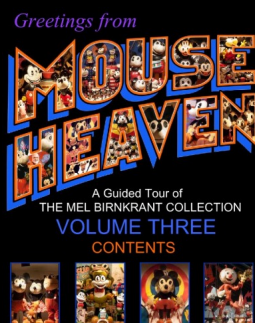
Video: The Toy Collector
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Ebook: Mouse Heaven #1
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Ebook: Mouse Heaven #2
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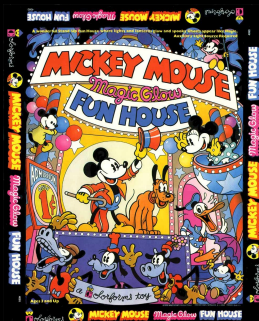
Ebook: Mouse Heaven #3
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Ebook: Mouse Heaven #4
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Ebook: Outer Space Men
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Interview: 10 Questions with Mel Birnkrant
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LEGENDARY Toy Inventor / Collector Mel Birnkrant Studio Visit!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xx-_d2E9iY

Mel is an AMAZING person and an AMAZING artist and was more than generous sharing his wisdom on creating art and philosophy on collecting. Mel currently has one of the largest and most AMAZING vintage toy collections from the 1930's and 40's on the planet!

I'm VERY excited to post the very FIRST "Studio Visit" with one of my all time FAVORITE artists Mel Birnkrant. It was about three weeks ago I had the AMAZING opportunity to visit Mel at his museum/home and discuss his art, toy collection, friendships and ideas about creating art!





Documentary: "Mel Birnkrant's AMAZING Collection: A Guided Tour!"
www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnwoY9jy7eQ

As many of the readers of this blog already know, I am a HUGE fan of toy inventor Mel Birnkrant (learn more about Mel's art and toy inventions). Over the past two years I have also become a HUGE fan of his antique toy collection. Mel has one of the most AMAZING collections of vintage Mickey Mouse and comic character art, images, and toys from 1900 - 1940! With his collection he has single handedly saved one of the GREATEST art movements never know, the beginnings of comic characters, comic art and comic toys in the 1900's!

Last year Mel and I created a AWESOME FREE Four Volume Ebook Series on his collection "Greetings From Mouse Heaven". I thought it would also be a great idea to do a trailer for the ebook and film Mel talking about a few sections. Well that first 15min video idea turned into a full hour long film documenting his collection, with stories and history behind the worlds GREATEST antique toy collection and art movements! Be sure to check it out!





INTRODUCTION



TOYS AS ART



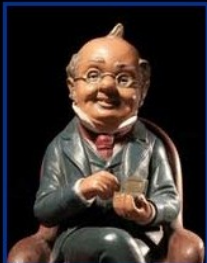
The BEGINNING



BETTY BOOP



BONZO



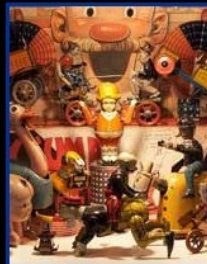
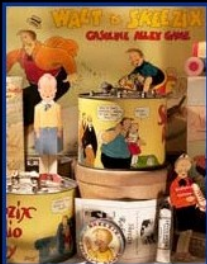
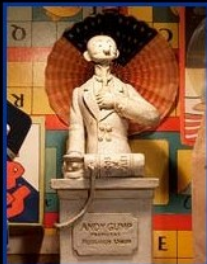
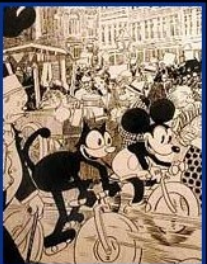
HALLOWEEN

BROWNIES & KEWPIES

FOXY GRANDPA

FUNNY FOLKS

MUTT & JEFF



BIEDERMANN

JIGGS & MAGGIE

ANDY GUMP

GASOLINE ALLEY

COMIC WINDUPS

Greetings From Mouse Heaven, Volume 1
<https://archive.org/details/GreetingsFromMouseHeavenVolume1>

In my opinion Mel has single handedly saved four decades of one of the **GREATEST** and most **FUN** unknown art movements to ever happen, toy art from 1900-1940! An entire genre of art never before seen by most and a genre that has almost no documentation. Incredibly sweet comic art, beautiful toy and puppet sculpture and toys that take hold of your entire imagination, no batteries needed!

I approached Mel with an idea. How about converting the Mouse Heaven website into a PDF Ebook. I spent a month putting together a sample to show Mel. Mel embraced the idea and began the painstaking process of carefully converting each webpage into a PDF ebook (with cheer leading and minimal technical support from yours truly). Within a month we had an **AMAZING** four volume PDF Ebook of "Greetings From Mouse Heaven", which is **FREE** to download load from Archive.org!



COMIC NODDERS



KRAZY KAT



FELIX The CAT



OSWALD



BLACK & WHITE



BISQUE PYRAMID



GEOMETRIC



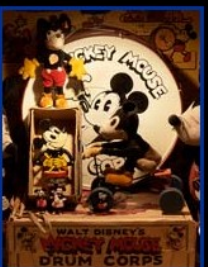
CELLULOID



MICKEY TIN



TALL TOWER



LOWER CASES



PUPPET CASE



POPEYE



POPEYE'S JEEP



CHARLIE CHAPLIN



HOLLYWOOD



BUCK ROGERS



CAROUSEL



The BIG DOLL



FAVORITES

Greetings From Mouse Heaven, Volume 2

<https://archive.org/details/GreetingsFromMouseHeavenVolume2>

Mel Birnkrant's lifelong Collection of Vintage Mickey Mouse and Comic Character Art, Images, and Toys
1900 - 1940.



UPPER CASES



FLIP The FROG



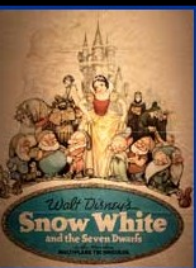
IN The HALL



ADVERTISING



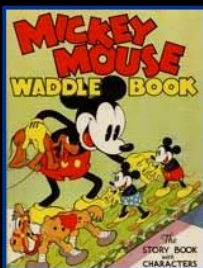
BIL BAIRD



SNOW WHITE



WIZARD of OZ



BLUE RIBBON BOOKS



OLD KING COLE



BIBENDUM



PINOCCHIO



FANTASIA



MICKEY MASKS



ORPHAN ANNIE



SOUND & LIGHT



LARS DOLLS



WORLD UPSTAIRS



LOOKIN' AROUND



JOHN FAWCETT



SONNY HATFIELD

Greetings From Mouse Heaven, Volume 3
<https://archive.org/details/GreetingsFromMouseHeavenVolume3>

Mel Bimkrant's lifelong Collection of Vintage Mickey Mouse and Comic Character Art, Images, and Toys 1900 - 1940.



Greetings From Mouse Heaven, Volume 4 (Charles Ponstingl)

<https://archive.org/details/GreetingsFromMouseHeavenVolume4CarvingTheComicsCharlesPonstingl>

This final Volume 4 of Mel's incredible collection covers one AMAZING talent, Charels Ponstingl!!
 SUPER detailed handpainted and hand carved comic character masterpeices! Be sure to check out this
 INCREDIBLE ebook on this AMAZING talent!!

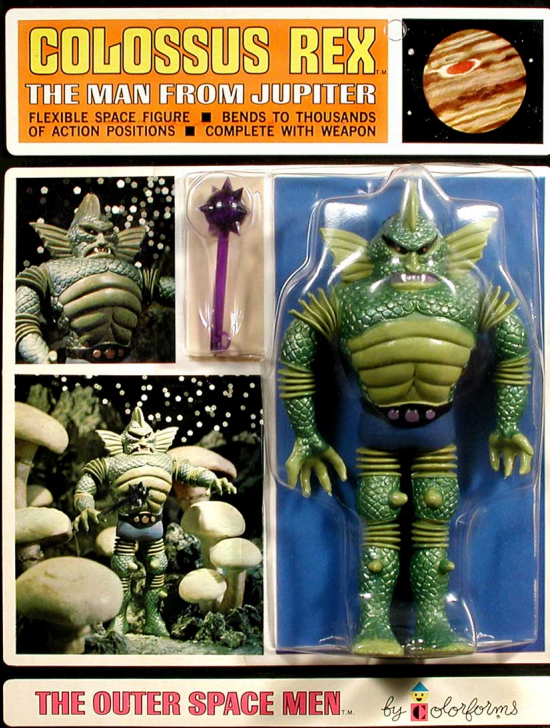




The Outer Space Men

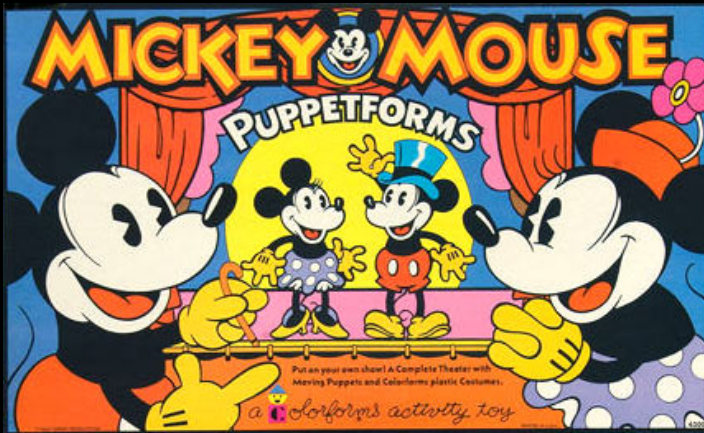
<https://archive.org/details/outerspacemen>

To understand the importance of Mel Birnkrant and the "Outer Space Men" we would have to take a look back at the history of toys and action figures specifically. Action figures were introduced around 1964 with the creation of Hasbro's 12" "GI Joe" doll figure ("GI Joe" was intended to be for boys what Barbie was for girls), technically not what we would consider an "action figure" by today's standards. Two years later in 1966 another type of 12" doll for boys was released called "Captain Action" by Ideal. That year also saw the release of Mattel's "Major Matt Mason". "Major Matt Mason" was the first figure that made the transition from 12" doll for boys to 5" to 6" poseable action figure toy. That an action figure should be and is still used as the standard for action figures to this day!



However, in my opinion Mattel's "Major Matt Mason" was still not the first true action figure. "Major Matt Mason" lacked imagination and fantasy elements that were needed to spark the imagination. As the story goes the day after Mel Birnkrant saw "Major Matt Mason" for the first time he began work on creating Colorforms "Outer Space Men" which invaded toy stores in 1968. Mel Birnkrant's Colorforms "Outer Space men" were light years ahead their time and set the standard for what an action figure should be and is still used as the standard for action figures to this day!

Learn the entire story of the very first AWESOME action figure with Mel Birnkrant's FREE "Outer Space Men Archive" ebook! The ebook is PHENOMENAL! Full of tons of images covering concept art, photos of the original figures in their original packaging, original paintings by the GREAT Bob Engle, and lots of behind the scenes photos of the creation of these AWESOME action figures. The ebook also has a ton of GREAT behind the scenes stories on the "Outer Space Men" as well as two full interviews with Mel Birnkrant!



The Colorform Years

<https://archive.org/details/thecolorformsyears>

Mel Birnkrant is one of my ALL time FAVORITE artists! He has created decades of AMAZING art and has also collected decades of AMAZING art! Which is why I'm so glad he has taken the time to document and preserve his art and his collection in Ebook form!

Mel and I have been working on his latest Ebook "Mel Birnkrant: The Colorforms Years" which covers "Mel Birnkrant's personal memoir of 20 years as the Creative Director of "Colorforms 1964 - 1986". This Ebook is AMAZING and full of hundreds of great quality color images of artwork from one of the GREATEST artists of all time! Not to mention personal stories and memories. Be sure to check it out and get your FREE download of the Ebook!

Adult Toys Inc.

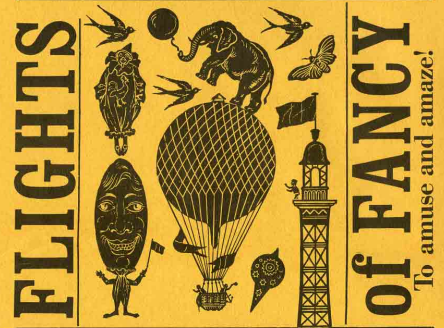
Has the honor, most respectfully, to present to the Ladies, Gentlemen and the Public at large, a New and Original concept

ADULT TOYS!

Putting an end to the centuries old myth that all toys are for children and presenting to the Mature and Discerning Adult a veritable Cornu copia of

WONDERS

Such as hitherto painted by imagination alone!



Original & Marvelous Inventions!

far exceeding all other Entertainments in novelty, variety and interest.



Sophisticated

DIVERSIONS

of all sorts, affording the most high and perfect embodiment of art, Elegance and Beauty ever yet offered to the Public, presenting to the World, Extraordinary Amusements, courting the pencil of the Artist, the chief of the Sculptor, the eye of the Man of Taste, the talent of the Author, and the admiration of the Scholar calling to remembrance the best of days gone by, bidding Fancy revel in the fields of light and imagination; causing the patron of the Arts to wish for an addition to his Gallery, and yielding new Ideas to poetical invention. The whole including a splendid series of

PLEASURES



To Purge Melancholy

which never fail to elicit shouts of Laughter and Applause and such exclamations of delight as OOOH! AAH! HOORAY! &

WOW!



10 Questions with Mel Birnkrant

1.... who is your favorite artist?

From the age of three, all throughout my only childhood, my favorite artist, god, and hero was that magnificent multiple entity, made up of the collective sweat and souls of many gifted men combined, known to the World as "Walt Disney".

Later on, while a student reluctantly studying illustration at Pratt, I became a Ben Shahn fan. Then, as a Beatnik hanging out in Paris, I was blown away by James Ensor's Masterpiece, "The Entry of Christ into Brussels", at the 1958 World's Fair.

Back in the USA, again, my dear friend of 45 years, Maurice Sendak became my favorite artist, and remains so, to this day. From a guy who created the Wild Things, because his editor told him he couldn't draw horses, [The book was originally titled "Where the Wild Horses Are"] he became, a master draftsman. To watch him drawing was amazing. He could start at the top of a page, and the image would magically appear, growing downward from there, a little at a time, until it reached the bottom, like lowering a curtain.. He explained that he could see the image in his mind, and the rest was just tracing the lines.



2.... do you offer workshops for artists?

No., But, in the early 1960's, I did give weekly drawing lessons to a young boy from Harlem. He was eleven and far more talented than I am. He was obsessed with creating his own comic strip. I found it curious and somewhat sad, symptomatic of the times, that all the super heroes he created were white guys.



3.... what do you like to listen to while you work?

I used to play the stereo continuously. That tapered off dramatically when my cat, Peewee passed away. He loved music and always listened with me. Then, I turned on the TV and got hooked on cable news, instead. Ever since this last election, I've, started playing music again. My tastes are eclectic: slightly off-beat classics, Leos Janacek, Eric Sati, Francis Poulenc, Vincent d'Indy, Renaldo Hahn, and Edward Elgar, stuff like that. I also have a large library of Chinese music. At the local Chinese Buffet, I can often name what they are playing. The titles are romantic, like "Song of the Night Fishermen" or "Colorful Clouds, Chasing the Moon".



5.... during an average week how many hours a day / week do you work on creating art?

When I was working on a project, and really into it, I'd work nonstop from sunrise, until well after midnight. Time, except for dinner time, did not exist for me. These obsessive work habits were tough on my family.

6.... are you working your dream job?

Jobs often walk a fine line, somewhere between dream and nightmare. Actually, I never really had a "job", dream, or otherwise. Nor did I have a "career". Instead, I perfected the fine art of scratching out a living, while "avoiding pain". My true passions always lay elsewhere. Collecting was my Quest. I lived a life of High Adventure, hunting mice and other comic characters, at every flea market, toy show, and antique show, on the East Coast, for over forty years. Discovering an incredible object, not intended to be art, and anointing it as such, by purchasing it to add to my collection, was the equivalent of "doing art" for me. Each new find was, essentially, a thrilling moment of creativity, spontaneous and instantaneous! At exhilarating times like these, I could sense my entire body tingling, and, ever so slightly, levitating.



4.... what medium and tools do you use to create your art?

I am beginning to believe the most exotic tool I ever used was the common pencil. I'm amazed to realize that nearly no one draws with one, these days! In later years, I saved a step by transforming my pencil lines into stronger black ones, using a Minolta copier. Then, I colored those printed drawings with waterproof markers. This was a tricky operation, for if a marker touched a line, it smeared and bled. Then again, small mishaps didn't matter, for none of the art I ever did was destined to be seen. It was all intended to, hopefully, sell a product, or aid in its manufacture. For sculpting, I adored Super Sculpey, in its heyday. That was before they changed the formula, making it nontoxic. Now it's good enough to eat, but not so good for sculpting.



7.... do you feel it's important for others to pursue their dream jobs?

Of course! Elementary, my dear Watson! If one is fortunate enough to have a dream, they **MUST** pursue it. But, in this complex world we live in, getting a dream isn't easy. We are bombarded with so many choices, attractive, only momentarily. You can't just go out and shop for one. A true dream, one that will shape and sustain your lifetime must be imposed upon you by Fate, and circumstances from beyond. The very phrase Dream Job is an oxymoron; two words that do not go together. Doing something unique, something that can be titled "self-employment" is, by far, the better route to take.

8.... where can people see your work (online, conventions or exhibits)?

My work ,my memories, my life, everything, is on display; some things are easy to see, others are buried deep, in my not so little website. Like me, it keeps growing bigger, every day. The stuff that succeeded, and a lot of what did not, is all there to be discovered:

<http://melbirnkrant.com/>

This link goes directly to what I've been involved with lately, updating the Outer Space Men:

<http://melbirnkrant.com/return/index.html>

Here are my most recent drawings, introducing, among other things, "Outer Space Women". Meanwhile, two new Astronauts from Planet Earth: "Terra Firma" and "Jack Asteroid" will appear this year.

<http://melbirnkrant.com/sketchbook/index.html>



9.... was there a certain moment that you knew you wanted to be an artist?

Absolutely! By curious circumstance, I was just writing about that, yesterday. If you don't mind, I'll simply cut and paste: One time, while lecturing our Freshman class at U of M in 1955, my art teacher made a statement that I'll never forget. He said: "A person must "Catch Fire" at some point in their lifetime". He meant become inspired, set ablaze with a passion and desire that will govern the course their destiny will take. And he added that: "If this event does not happen during one's college days, it is never likely to take place."

Wondering, if and when, I ever became inflamed, I suddenly realized that I did! And I recall the exact time and place. It was not when I was in college, but many years before then, when I was four years old, living on my little street in Berkley, Michigan. There was a girl there, a playmate's teenaged sister, living down the street from me. She had borrowed a marvelous book from the Detroit Public Library. It was an impressive volume called "The Art of Walt Disney" by Robert D. Field. And, being something of an artist, she had rendered what seemed to me to be a perfect copy of the most wondrous illustration in the book, a scene from Walt Disney's Pinocchio. It depicted Pinocchio, on stage, with the provocative French marionette, alluring to me, even then. I thought this large impressive work of art was the most wonderful thing that I had ever seen. Yes, it was there, at that moment, beholding my young neighbor's magnificent painting that I first burst into Flame. Simple isn't it, beginning then, a future that embodied Art, Disney, and even France, lay ahead of me.



To all you “other” artists out there. I'd simply like to say, “Enjoy!” Glory in your gift! Your talent, whether hard won, or handed to you on a silver platter, is your ticket to escaping a life that might otherwise have been mundane and ordinary. When agonizing over how to mix a certain color, or confronting a problem in perspective or anatomy, never lose sight of the fact that merely being permitted to indulge in these activities is a Luxury. You are among the World's most Lucky!

Collection Guided Tour

